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ABSTRACT

The central concern of the research reported in this speech was to investigate the relationships between the manner in which a senior high school principal administers rules and the teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership, and staff militancy. The authors first discuss the conceptual framework for the study and then present the four hypotheses which were developed and tested: that principals with high representative rule administration behavior will have a staff with low militancy and will be perceived as having high leadership, and that principals with high punishment-centered rule administration behavior will have a staff with high militancy and will be perceived as having low leadership. The sample consisted of 15 senior high school teachers from each of 24 high schools. The presentation includes descriptions of the instruments used to measure militancy, leadership, and rule administration; the design of the hypotheses tested; and the test results. The document concludes with a discussion of the results and their implications, and makes recommendations to high school principals for rule administration. (Author/DN)

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THE EFFECT OF THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S RULE ADMINISTRATION BEHAVIOR ON STAFF MILITANCY AND LEADERSHIP PERCEPTION

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The central concern of this research was to investigate the relationships between the manner in which a senior high school principal administers rules and the teacher's perception of the principal's leadership, and staff militancy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The investigation of leadership styles has been of increasing concern to both behavioral scientists and students of educational administration.

Typical of these researchers, Rensis Likert (1967) in The Human Organization, conceptualizes four management styles ranging from "Exploitive-Authoritative" to "Participative-Group" and strongly advocates an increased use of a participatory management style by today's executives. Likert contents that participative managers are more creative, successful, and effective. Blake and Mouton (1968) conceptualize the same notion by means of a managerial grid utilizing the variables of concern for people, and concern for production. Their

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ideal of "team management" is the simultaneous maximizing of the variables; maximum concern for people and maximum concern for production.

This notion that organizations (through their management) must be concerned with both individual needs as well as organizational goals is neither new nor a concept relevant only to the private sector. In regard to the former, the writings of Chester Barnard (1938) and Roethlisberger (1938) are quite similar in support for goal integration (mutual satisfaction of individual and organizational goals) to the writings of Barrett (1970) and Argyris (1968).

In regard to the latter contention and of particular significance to our study, many researchers in education have advocated increased administrator concern for goal integration. Andrew Halpin (1959) identified two significant dimensions of leadership in school systems, "consideration" and "initiating structure-in-interaction." These dimensions closely parallel the variables previously described as being effective in goal integration in the private sector.

Getzels and Guba (1957) attempt to describe administration in education as a social process and propose a model with nomothetic and idiographic dimensions. These dimensions represent organizational goals and individual needs, and in the words of the authors, "the unique task of administration is to integrate the demands of the institution and the demands of the staff members in a way that is at once organizationally productive and individually fulfilling."

Having arrived, therefore, at a virtual consensus on the importance of goal integration as a vehicle for administrative leadership, one must find a model to use in measuring the extent to which principals exhibit integrative behavior and if, in fact, this behavior does affect the professional staff.

Gouldner (1954) proposed a model for analyzing managerial behavior in respect to the manner in which rules are administered. The model classifies

administrative behavior into three types of rule administration: representative, mock, and punishment-centered. Representative rule administration is typified by joint support or modification of rules, wherein both parties support conformity to and enforcement of the rule, but through explanation and understanding of the rule. Mock rule administration was defined as the behavior associated with ignoring rules that are imposed from external sources. Punishment-centered rule administration behavior is typified by conflict between the rule enforcer and the individual affected by the rule; that is, rules enforced by principals that are evaded or accepted as punishment by teachers.

Using the Gouldner model, Lutz and Evans (1968) conducted a study in New York City to determine the relationships, if any, between the rule administration of principals and the leadership climate of the school as perceived by the teachers. Their findings were that principals who exhibited high representative rule administration behavior were perceived by teachers to be high in "executive professional leadership" (Gross and Herriott, 1965). Whereas, principals who exhibited high punishment-centered rule administration were low in perceived leadership. The study found that mock rule administration produced a mirror effect which reflected the dominant other type of rule behavior. This effect of mock rule behavior supported representative principals, but led to a "wait and see" attitude on the part of teachers in schools with punishment-centered principals. It was also discovered that no administrator operated without some punishment-centered behavior.

Based on the results of the New York study; the necessity of goal-integrative behavior for school administrators; and the increasing demands from teachers to participate in educational decision-making through collective bargaining; the following hypotheses were developed and tested in the present study.

(1) There is a relationship between teachers' perception of principals' representative rule administration behavior and staff militancy such that principals with high representative rule administration behavior will have a staff with low militancy.

(2) There is a relationship between teachers' perception of principals' punishment-centered rule administration behavior and staff militancy such that principals with high punishment-centered rule administration behavior will have a staff with high militancy.

(3) There is a relationship between principals' punishment-centered rule administration behavior and teachers' perception of their leadership such that principals with high punishment-centered rule administration behavior will be perceived as having low leadership.

(4) There is a relationship between principals' representative rule administration behavior and teachers' perception of their leadership such that principals with high representative rule administration behavior will be perceived as having high leadership.

THE SAMPLE

The sample utilized in this investigation consisted of fifteen senior high school teachers from each of twenty-four public senior high schools. A total of 360 classroom teachers were randomly selected from alphabetical faculty listings as submitted by the respective schools.

The twenty-four public senior high schools were selected according to three variables: the school building pupil population; the nature of the school district; and the size of the school district. Schools were identified and classified as urban, suburban, or rural in composition as well as being located in large, medium, or small towns. The variable of school building population was based on the arbitrary classification of less than 750 pupils, between 750 and 1500 pupils, and more than 1500 pupils.

There were usable returns from 250 respondents comprising over 70% of the original sample.

INSTRUMENTS

Carlton's Militancy Scale (Carlton, 1967) was used to measure teacher militancy. This scale has a reported (split-half) reliability of .82.

The Executive Professional Leadership Scale (Gross and Harriott, 1965) was used to measure the teachers' perception of the principals' leadership. This scale was produced by using the Guttman (1944) scaling technique and has a reproducibility coefficient of .978.

In order to measure the teachers' perception of the rule administration behavior of the high school principal, a Rule Administration Scale was developed by the authors. This scale was developed by using the Guttman scaling technique for each sub-scale (1) representative, (2) mock, and (3) punishment-centered, resulting in reproducibility coefficients of (1) .9033, (2) .9143, and (3) .9200, respectively.

DESIGN

Each of the four hypotheses were tested in their null form using the Pearson produce-moment correlation in order to determine if the relationship

predicted was statistically different than zero. In all cases the .05 confidence level was required in order to reject the null hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Hypothesis #1 - A relationship was predicted between high representative rule administration behavior and low teacher militancy. A correlation of .0000 was obtained which is not significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis #2 - A relationship was predicted between high punishment-centered rule administration and high staff militancy. A correlation of -.1004 was obtained which was not significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis #3 - A relationship was predicted between punishment-centered rule administration behavior and teachers' perception of low professional leadership. A correlation of -.1359 was obtained. Being significant beyond the .05 level, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis #4 - A relationship was predicted between representative-centered rule administration behavior and teachers' perception of high professional leadership. A correlation of .1891 was obtained. This correlation is significant beyond the .05 level and the null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

Although no relationships were predicted, the following analyses were conducted in order to better understand and interpret the findings of the study.

Mock Rule Administration Behavior

Mock behavior on the part of high school principals was found to be highly related to teachers' perception of low principal professional leadership. A correlation of -.2043 was obtained which is significant beyond the .001 level of confidence.

Mock and Punishment-Centered Rule Administration Behavior

The two independent variables of mock and punishment-centered rule administration behavior on the part of principals were found to be highly related in a negative order; that is, the two behaviors were perceived in an inverse relationship. A correlation coefficient of -.1827 was obtained which is significant beyond the .005 level of confidence.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Perceived Leadership and Rule Administration Behavior

The relationships between these variables were one of the two major purposes of the study. These relationships were proposed in Hypotheses #3 and #4, with considerable theoretical and imperical support. Both of the hypotheses were supported by the rejection of null hypotheses well beyond the .05 level of confidence. Senior high school principals who are perceived by teachers as being representative in their rule administration are also perceived as having high professional leadership. Likewise, when teachers perceive principals as punishment-centered in their rule administration, they are perceived as having low professional leadership.

Mock Rule Administration Behavior

A relationship concerning which no predictions were made, but one of high interest to the researchers was that of mock rule administration behavior and perceived principal leadership. As previously reported, this relationship proved to be the most statistically significant ($r = -.2043$; $p < .001$) of those tested in the study.

It appears that indecisiveness, inability to carry out the rules, or ignoring the rules can cause a senior high school principal a greater loss of leadership status than punishment-centered enforcement of rules. The interaction of this variable with the other independent variables as well as professional leadership tends to support the following rationale for principal rule administration behavior.

(1) Highly representative high school principals exhibiting some mock and punishment-centered rule administration behavior will be perceived by the teachers as having the highest level of professional leadership. This generalization is based on (a) a highly significant positive representative-leadership relationship, (b) highly significant negative mock and punishment-centered-leadership relationships, and (c) insignificant relationships between representative rule administration and the other two independent variables.

(2) Highly punishment-centered high school principals will be perceived as having low professional leadership (Hypotheses #4, $p < .05$).

(3) High school principals exhibiting extensive mock rule administration behavior will be perceived to have the lowest professional leadership ($p < .001$).

(4) The mock rule administration behavior of the high school principal is critical to faculty perception of his leadership and further study of this variable is needed. As pointed out in statement (3) above, when mock becomes the dominant rule behavior, the principal is held in low esteem. However, from the analysis of the relationships between the independent variables, it would appear that representative principals enhance their perceived leadership through use of mock behavior while punishment-centered principals use little mock rule behavior, and whatever amount is used tends to further detract from their perceived leadership.

These findings should be of benefit to high school principals in their attempt to operationalize goal integration. Inasmuch as principals must administer rules, both internal and external to the building, it should be helpful to know that this rule administration can be useful in increasing his leadership as perceived by the staff.

Staff Militancy and Rule Administration Behavior

The results of this study did not support any relationships between staff militancy and the perceived rule administrative behavior of the high school principal. This cannot be attributed to the uniqueness of the sample because of ancillary findings in the personal data of the respondents. Relationships were

found in the personal variables between length of teaching experience, sex, and militancy. These findings were consistent with other recent studies and reveal a higher degree of militancy in men, and in younger teachers (teachers with fewer years' experience).

Three plausible explanations seem to be (1) the spread of collective bargaining has caused an increase in faculty militancy over the last decade that may have begun to level in respect to the scope of attitudes within districts, (2) the concept of militancy was to general for the purposes of this research which might have focused on organizational militancy as distinct from overall collective bargaining attitudes, and (3) the instrument utilized to measure teacher militancy may be less valid today than when originally developed due to changes in teacher attitudes. These attitudes have been affected by changes in teacher negotiation power, increase of state negotiations laws, and the professional and public behavior of teacher groups.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Senior high school principals are daily faced with the task of administering rules in respect to the faculty, the student body, and the nonprofessional staff. In fact, they perceive some of these new rules (teacher contracts and board policies) as infringements upon their traditional areas of power. Regardless of these feelings, however, the high school principal will continue to spend a portion of his time administering external and internal rules. Relationships have now been established that will assist principals in their rule administration behavior so as to increase their professional leadership as perceived by the staff.

These findings are such that principals who are predominately representative in their rule administration behavior will be perceived by teachers as high in professional leadership. High school principals who demonstrate predominate styles of mock or punishment-centered rule administration behavior will be perceived by teachers as having low professional leadership.

Mock rule administration behavior appears to be critical in the interaction among the three styles. In isolation, it creates negative sentiment toward leadership while in combination with representative behavior it apparently adds to perceived leadership. It is recommended that additional research in this area concentrate on the interaction of these three variables as they occur in the rule administration behavior of high school principals.

It is also recommended that future research in respect to staff militancy be more specific in the definition of such militancy and insure that quantification instruments are valid under present conditions.

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